Premier League

Matchday 34 of 38

26th April, 2025

Chelsea   Everton

vs

1 - **0**

27' Nicolas Jackson
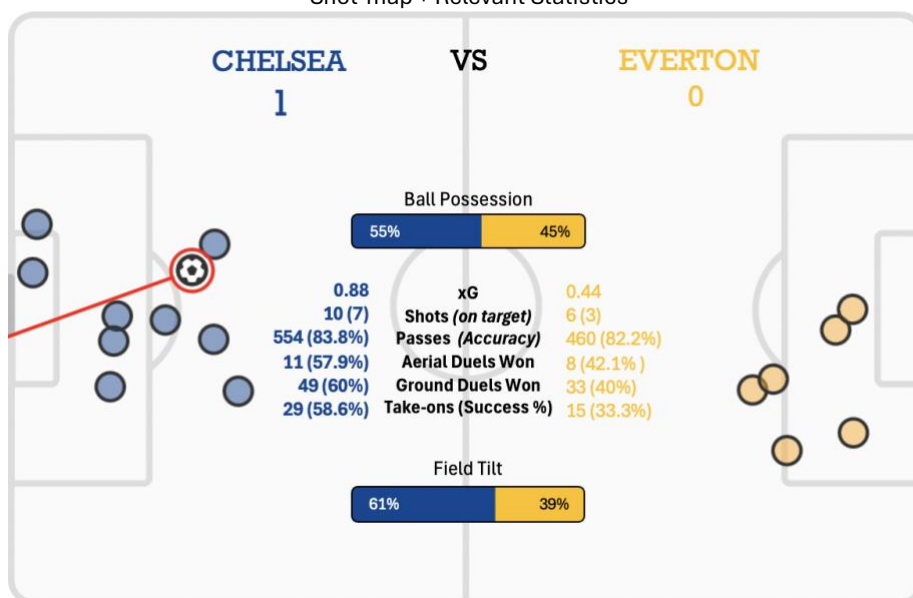
BRIEF SUMMARY OF MATCH OUTCOME

<u>**CHELSEA**</u> : controlled-possession and quick, wide attacks

vs

<u>**EVERTON**</u> : low-block and counter-attacking system

Figure 1:
Shot-map + Relevant Statistics

Chelsea put up a dominant performance against Everton at Stamford Bridge, with Enzo Maresca's tactics preventing Everton from posing a threat to Chelsea for a majority of the game. After taking a lead in the 27th minute and controlling the tempo for a majority of the game, Chelsea were able to see out a late Everton charge to take all 3 points from this fixture.
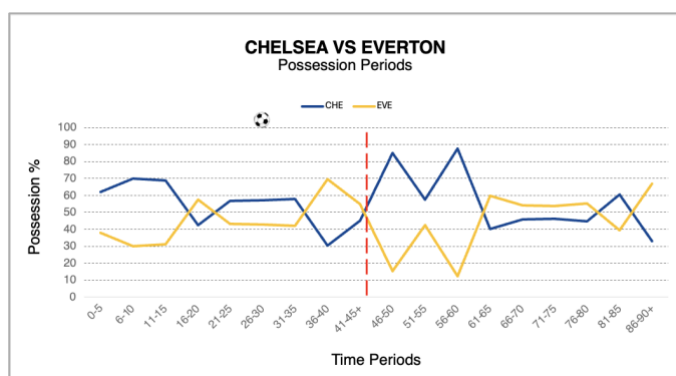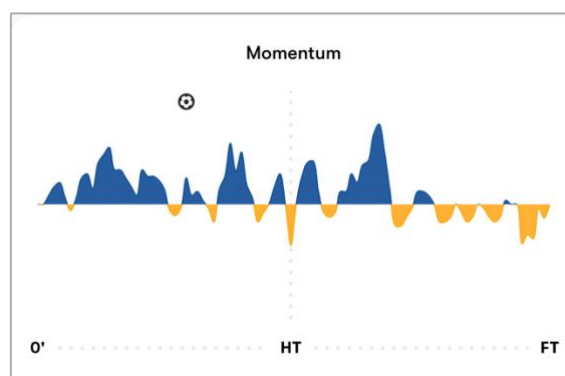
| *Figure 2:*	*Figure 3:*
Possession Periods	Momentum Chart

Chelsea's inverting right-back along with the movements of Enzo Fernandez, Cole Palmer and Nicolas Jackson, allowed Chelsea to create numerical overloads in midfield, helping them dictate tempo and control possession in the middle of the pitch. Additionally, Noni Madueke and Pedro Neto's pace and dribbling ability created constant issues for Everton's full-backs, who failed to keep up with Chelsea's wide midfielders.

Let's dive deeper into the tactical analysis of both teams to get a better understanding of how the teams were set-up and how key factors shaped this fixture's result.

TACTICAL ANALYSIS

Figure 4:
Chelsea vs Everton: Starting XI and Formation
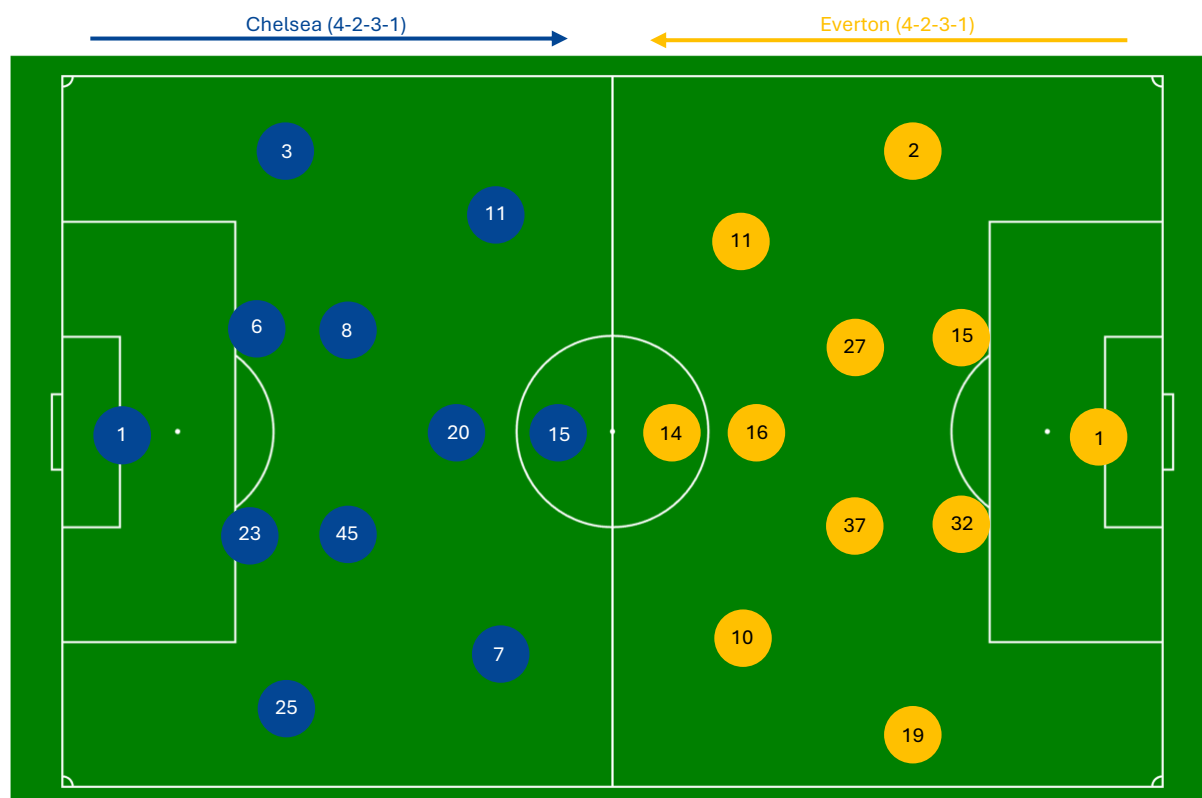
CHELSEA:

In-possession tactics

Chelsea shift into a **3-2-5** formation in-possession, by inverting **Moises Caicedo** (#25) from right-back into a midfield pivot alongside **Romeo Lavia** (#45).

- **Enzo Fernandez** (#8) and **Cole Palmer** (#20) occupied the left and right half-spaces respectively, with both players given the freedom to roam in the midfield third to find space and open passing lanes for ball progression.

- **Pedro Neto** (#7) and **Noni Madueke** (#11) provided width by staying close to the touchline.

Out-of-possession tactics

Chelsea revert back into their **4-2-3-1** shape when out-of-possession, taking an aggressive approach to win the ball quickly once Everton's attackers receive the ball.

- *Chelsea's Rest Defence* – **Romeo Lavia** (#45), **Moises Caicedo** (#25), **Marc Cucurella** (#3), **Levi Colwill** (#6), and **Trevoh Chalobah** (#23) – were instructed to prevent Everton's attacking players from holding possession and progressing through the midfield third.

EVERTON:

In-possession tactics

Everton attack using a **4-2-3-1** shape. However, with left-back **Vitalii Mykolenko** (#19) joining the attack on the left wing, they would essentially attack in a 3-2-4-1 formation.

- **Iliman Ndiaye** (#10) drifts towards the middle, occupying the right half-space and moving into pockets to provide passing options for his teammates. This movement allows **Vitalii Mykolenko** (#19) to join the attack on the left wing.
- **Jack Harrison** (#11) stays wide on the right flank.
- **Idrissa Gana Gueye** (#27) and **James Garner** (#37) occasionally support the attack.

Everton played short passes during goalkicks, inviting a press from Chelsea to open space for their attacking players to receive long passes.

Out-of-possession tactics

Everton used a **4-2-3-1** shape off-the-ball, emphasizing on creating a low block to prevent space in central areas within Chelsea's attacking third.

- **Abdoulaye Doucouré** (#16) joins **Beto** (#14) to create the front 2, while **Iliman Ndiaye** (#10) and **Jack Harrison** (#11) drop alongside the two holding midfielders to create a 4-man midfield.
- **James Garner** (#37) was instructed to man-mark Cole Palmer's movements.

During Chelsea's build-up and progression phases, Everton's players attempted to cover passing lanes through the middle of the pitch to prevent Chelsea's midfielders from receiving line-breaking passes.

I. CHELSEA'S NUMERICAL OVERLOAD IN MIDFIELD

Figure 5:
Chelsea (in-possession) vs Everton (out-of-possession)
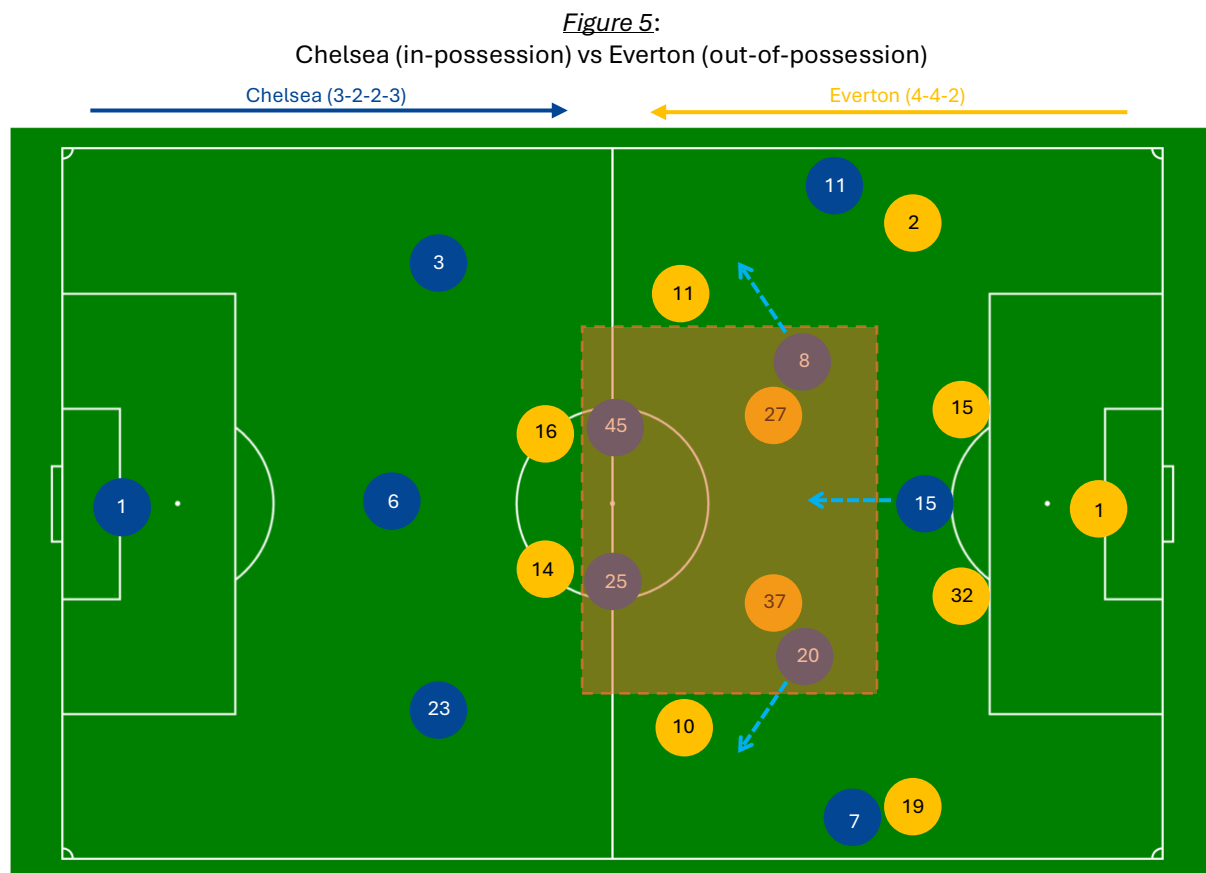
- There was an evident numerical mismatch in central midfield, with four Chelsea players (Caicedo, Lavia, Palmer, Enzo) being covered by just two Everton midfielders (Gueye, Garner).

  o With **Garner** (#37) marking **Cole Palmer's** (#20) movements, **Gueye** (#27) was asked to cover a lot of space in midfield for Everton.

  o **Harrison** (#11) and **Ndiaye** (#10) would help occasionally by dropping into the central areas, but they were often focused on pressing Chelsea's wide defenders when Chelsea tried to build from deep.

- **Beto** (#14) and **Doucouré** (#16) were repeatedly caught in two minds – whether to press Chelsea's defensive unit or cover passing lanes to **Caicedo** (#25) and **Lavia** (#45). Either way, Chelsea were able to progress the ball using the unmarked players.

- In instances where the passing lanes to both **Fernández** (#8) and **Palmer** (#20) were covered, **Jackson** (#15) was seen dropping into midfield to receive passes in between the lines.

  o **Jackson's** (#15) movement usually attracted **Branthwaite** (#32) to follow him into midfield, creating a gap for **Palmer** (#20) to run into while also isolating **Mykolenko** (#19) with **Neto** (#7).

  o If Jackson's movement was not tracked by either of Everton's centre-backs, it attracted the attention of **Gueye** (#27), leaving **Enzo Fernández** (#8) unmarked.

Chelsea's midfield dominance helped them dictate tempo, control possession, and progress the ball forward comfortably, with barely any goal-scoring threat by Everton.

Table 1:
Chelsea vs Everton, minutes 0-60': Relevant metrics   [*Data Source: Opta*]

Metric	Chelsea	Everton
Goals	1	0
xG	0.44	0.18
Shots (on target)	6 (4)	2 (0)
Possession	61.0%	39.0%
Passes in Opponent's Half	213	104

II. EVERTON FULL-BACKS VS CHELSEA WINGERS

Another key factor in this fixture was Everton's full-backs being isolated against Chelsea's wingers / wide midfielders, with **Pedro Neto** (#7) and **Noni Madueke** (#11) consistently using their pace and dribbling ability to get drive past **Vitalii Mykolenko** (#19) and **Nathan Patterson** (#2) respectively, creating chances for Chelsea via the flanks.

- **Pedro Neto** (#7) recorded a take-on success rate of 75% (3/4) against Everton, while **Vitalii Mykolenko** (#19) had a dribblers tackled rate of 0% (0/4).

- **Noni Madueke** (#11) attempted more take-ons but wasn't as successful as Pedro Neto, succeeding in 50% of his take-ons (4/8). However, Madueke completed 5 carries into the penalty area, 4 more than any other player on the pitch.

Figure 6:
Chelsea Attack Sides vs Everton

Neto and Madueke's technical abilities were constantly used by Chelsea to create chances, using width to attack against Everton.

[*Data Source: WhoScored.com*]

III. **CHELSEA'S AGGRESSIVENESS OFF-THE-BALL**

Chelsea's off-the-ball instructions were equally important to their on-the-ball tactics in asserting a dominant performance over Everton in this fixture. As per the pre-match analysis for this fixture, Everton were expected to use long balls aimed at their attacking players when in-possession of the ball in their own half. Chelsea's rest defence were prepared for these passes, often applying pressure to Everton's attacking unit when the ball was played to them.

Figure 7:
Chelsea Rest Defence: Tackles won, Interceptions, and Recoveries
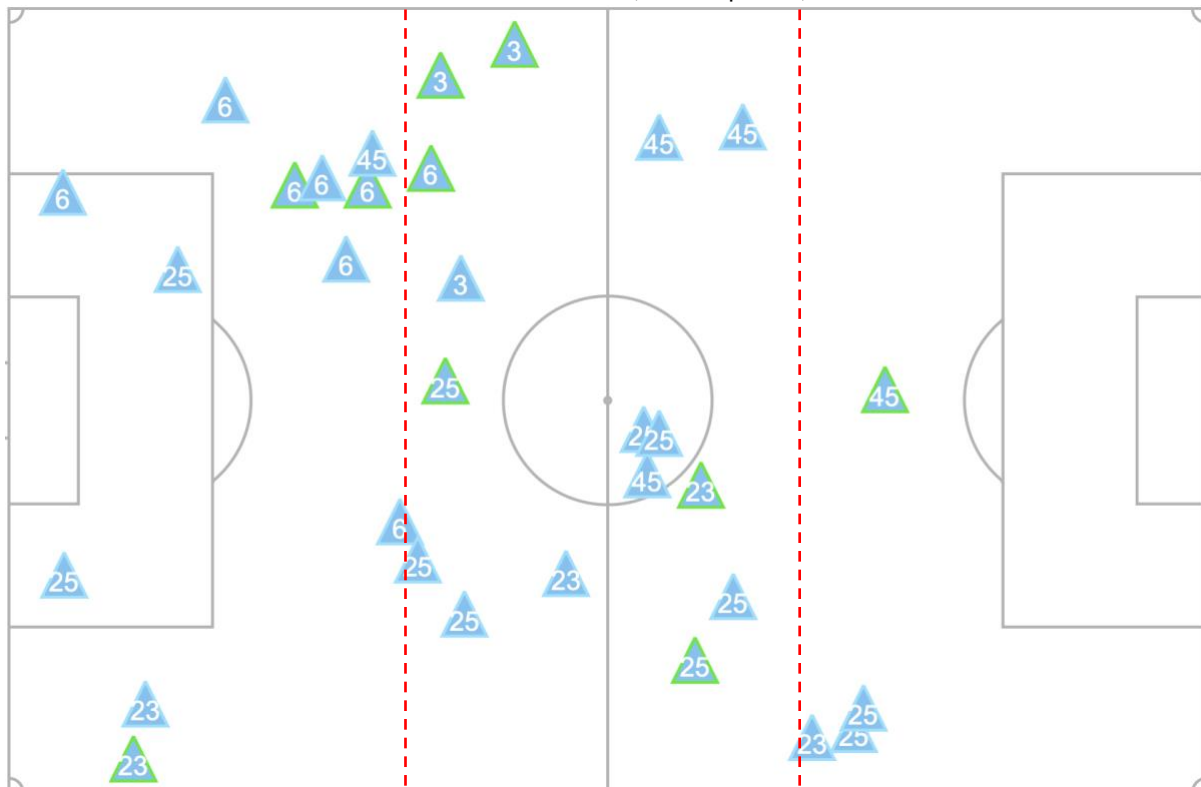
[*Data Source: Opta*]

- Chelsea made 16 tackles outside their defensive third (12 in midfield, 4 in attacking third) compared to Everton's 8 tackles (8 in midfield third, 0 in attacking third)

- Everton's attacking unit was poor in-possession up front, often losing out to Chelsea's rest defence.

Table 2:
Everton Attackers: Possession Metrics   [*Data Source: FBRef*]

Metric	Beto (#14)	Harrison (#11)	Doucouré (#16)	Ndiaye (#11)
Miscontrolled	3	3	1	0
Dispossessed	3	1	1	0
Take-Ons: Tackled %	50% (1/2)	-	100% (0/2)	50% (1/2)

- **Beto** (#14) in particular, was poor on-the-ball. As Everton's target man, he was often careless in possession, unable to hold-up play under the pressure of Chelsea's defenders.

GOAL 27' Nicolas Jackson | **Chelsea** 1 – 0 Everton

The events that led to Chelsea's goal in this fixture occurred on two other occasions (10th and 17th minute) before Nicolas Jackson eventually scored in the 27th minute.

Everton split their centre-backs during build-up, while the full-backs occupy wide, advanced positions. By playing short, they invite Chelsea to press high, creating space for their attacking players to receive long balls.

Everton playing out from the back with split centre-backs

Everton move the ball to their attacking players, usually aiming for **Beto** (#14) who played as their target man. However, Chelsea's numerical overload and aggressiveness in the midfield third allowed them to win the ball back and quickly attack the gap left between the split centre-backs.

Beto losing possession in the midfield third to Chelsea's rest defence

Nicolas Jackson in-possession at the edge of box against disorganized Everton defence

The only difference between the earlier chances and the goal in the 27th minute is that Nicolas Jackson chose to shoot instead of laying the ball of to his supporting teammates.

EVERTON FIGHT BACK / CHELSEA SEEING OUT THE REST OF THE GAME

- The introduction of **Carlos Alcaraz** (#24) in the second half helped Everton attack better, being able to control the ball better in the midfield third under pressure from Chelsea's defenders.

- Chelsea also reduced their off-the-ball intensity after the 60th minute, allowing Everton to progress the ball into their attacking half more often.

Table 3:
Everton Metrics vs Chelsea   [*Data Source: Opta*]

Metric	1st Half	2nd Half
Shots (on target)	1 (0)	5 (3)
xG	0.16	0.29
xGOT	0.00	0.99
Passes in own half	114	86
Passes in opposition half	65	83
Touches in opposition box	3	8

- Everton tested Chelsea's defence much more in the last 30 minutes of the game, making more passes in the opposition half, getting more touches in the opposition box, and creating more chances.

Robert Sanchez (#1) made a couple of really important saves (prevented xGOT of 0.99). His performance helped Chelsea keep a clean sheet and see out a 1-0 victory against Everton.